

Message Text

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17

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

OMB-01 IO-13 /078 W

----- 013906

R 071930Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2284

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KINGSTON 3743

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, JM

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS CONFIRMED FOR EARLY 1977

1. PM MANLEY IN PUBLIC STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 3 CONFIRMED GOJ WILL MOVE AHEAD IN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER WITH REDISTRIBUTION ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES AND ESTABLISHMENT NEW CONSTITUENCIES (CONSTITUTION PERMITS INCREASE, THIS NOVEMBER, OF SEATS IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM PRESENT 53 TO MAXIMUM OF 60). FOREGOING PROBABLY WILL BE COMPLETED SOMETIME IN DECEMBER AND WILL BE AIMED (FROM MANLEY'S POINT OF VIEW) AT ELIMINATING PRESENT SITUATION IN WHICH GOVERNMENT PARTY (PNP) COULD WIN 53 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE BUT STILL LOSE CONTROL OF HOUSE. ABOVE ACTION MEANS THAT MANLEY HAS DECIDED RIDE OUT PRESENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN HOPE THAT A BIT JUDICIOUS

GERRYMANDERING WILL MORE THAN COMPENSATE FOR WHATEVER GROUND BEING LOST WITH CONTINUING DETERIORATION IN ECONOMY. (GERRYMANDERING, INCLUDING USE OF THE WORD, HAS BECOME AN ENTRENCHED JAMAICAN POLITICAL CUSTOM ENGAGED IN BY THE GOVERNMENT IN OFFICE EACH FIVE YEARS
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WHEN THE CONSTITUTION PERMITS SAME.)

2. SINCE IT WILL TAKE SOME WEEKS AFTER COMPLETION OF ABOVE EXERCISE TO INTRODUCE CANDIDATES FOR NEW CONSTITUENCIES, SET UP CAMPAIGN MACHINERY, ETC., IT SEEMS SAFE TO ASSUME THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS AT EARLIEST WILL BE SOMETIME IN JANUARY BUT BEFORE JUNE. THE OUTSIDE TIMEFRAME IS DETERMINED BY THE CONSTITUTION. ELECTIONS MUST BE HELD AT THE LATEST THREE MONTHS AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF A GOVERNMENT'S FIVE-YEAR TERM OF OFFICE. THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT'S FIVE-YEAR TERM EXPIRES AT END OF FEBRUARY.

GERARD

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